

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00 AID-05
CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01
TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /123 W
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P 050405Z OCTN77
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6558
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

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FROM USDEL/SPC

MANILA PASS TO AMBASSADOR EDMOND/ADB

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, PLOS, PORG, XP
SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE - REGIONAL FISHERIES ISSUE

REF: A) STATE 223459, B) SUVA 1091, CL STATE 227991, D) PORT

MORESBY 1342

1. SUMMARY: AT THE SEVENTEENTH FOURTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, HELD
IN PAGO PAGO SEPTEMBER 24-30, NEAR UNANIMITY PREVAILED AMONG
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS OVER NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERY RESOURCES. ALL SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM
MEMBERS STATED THEY WOULD ATTEND THE SUVA MEETING IN NOVEMBER TO
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ESTABLISH A SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY. UK AND FRANCE
ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD ALSO SEND DELEGATIONS. THE USDEL INDICATED
IT WAS HOPEFUL THE USG WOULD ATTEND THE SUVA MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. DEBATE ON THE FISHERIES CENTERED ON THE ISLAND GOVERNMENTS'
BELIEF THAT DISTANT WATER FISHING NATIONS HAD, IN EFFECT, BEEN

MAKING OFF WITH FISH THAT BELONGED TO THE ISLANDS THEMSELVES. THEIR GOVERNMENTS WERE THEREBY DEPRIVED OF BADLY NEEDED REVENUE AND HAD TO BUY THE CANNED PRODUCT BACK AT PREMIUM PRICES. WESTERN SAMOA ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT IT WOULD DO LITTLE GOOD TO DECLARE A 200- MILE LIMIT IF IT COULDN'T BE ENFORCED AND THE ONLY WAY A 200- MILE LIMIT COULD BE ENFORCED WOULD BE WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE MAJOR FISHING NATIONS.

3. THE USDEL STATED THAT THE USG PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THIS ISSUE, AND SYMPATHIZED WITH THE IMPORTANCE PACIFIC NATIONS PLACED ON MAKING FULL USE OF THEIR MARINE RESOURCES. WHILE HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES HAD BEEN EXEMPTED FROM COASTAL STATE REGULATION UNDER US LAW, THE LAW DID PROVIDE FOR REGULATION BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. THE USDEL STATED THAT IT WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE USG WOULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER THE INVITATION AND ATTEND THE SUVA MEETING. (AT THIS POINT, THE WESTERN SAMOA DELEGATION BROKE INTO APPLAUSE). AUSTRALIA THANKED THE USG FOR ITS FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE.

4. UK AND FRANCE INDICATED THEY WOULD JOIN THE FORUM MEMBERS, ALL OF WHOM HAD ACCEPTED, IN ATTENDING THE SUVA MEETING. FRANCE ALSO STATED IT "NOW ACCEPTS THE IDEA OF A 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE."

5. JAMES BOLGER, NEW ZEALAND FISHERIES MINISTER, INTRODUCED A

RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY, WHICH HAD BEEN HANDED TO THE USDEL IN ADVANCE FOR COMMENT. THE PAPER WAS CAREFULLY CRAFTED BY NEW ZEALAND, WORKING WITH SEVERAL ISLAND CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENTS, TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE USG, WHILE CONTAINING JUST ENOUGH FLOURISHES ABOUT THENFORUM TO MOLLIFY PNG AND FIJI. (TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION HAS BEEN SENT SEPTTEL). THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED WITHOUT OBJECTION.

6. COMMENT: THE FISHERIES AGENCY WAS CLEARLY THE ISSUE OF GREATEST CONCERN AT THE CONFERENCE. IT DOMINATED CORRIDOR AND AFTER HOURS CONVERSATIONS. THE USDEL WAS Lobbied VIGOROUSLY BY NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, WESTERN SAMOA AND OTHERS WHO URGED THE USG TO ATTEND THE SUVA MEETING, AND IF AT ALL POSSIBLE TO JOIN THE AGENCY. "DON'T ASK YOUR LAWYERS IF YOU CAN JOIN," BOLGER SAID AT ONE POINT, "BECAUSE THEY'LL TELL YOU YOU CAN'T. INSTEAD TELL THEM TO FIND YOU A WAY TO JOIN." THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT A NUMBER OF FORUM MEMBERS HAD WORKED LONG AND HARD TO PREVENT THE USG FROM BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE UPCOMING SUVA MEETING. THEY PARTICULARLY

WISH GUAM, AMERICAN SAMOA AND TTPI TO BE REPRESENTED IN SOME FASHION AT THE CONFERENCE. WE BELIEVE SERIOUS THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO INCLUDING TERRITORIAL REPS ON THE DELEGATION. WHICH THE USDEL TO

SPC CONFERENCE IS NOT UALIFIED TO SPEAK TO THE ISSUE OF FISHERIES
POLICY OR LOS MATTERS, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HOW THE USG RESPONDF
TO THE REGIONAL FISHERIES ISSUE WILL AFFECT THE TYPE AND
LEVEL OF POLITICAL RELATIONS THE USG WILL HAVE WITH SOUTH PACIFIC
NATIONS FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. THE ISSUE IS THAT IMPORTANT
TO THEM.
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NNN

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